

Sūrah 93

Al-Ḍuḥā (The Forenoon)

(Makkan Period)

Title

al-Ḍuḥā (the forenoon), the *Sūrah*'s opening word, provides its title.

Period of Revelation

As is evident from its contents, the *Sūrah* must have been revealed during the very early Makkan period. *Ḥadīth* reports state that the phenomenon of divine revelation had remained suspended for some time, which greatly disturbed the Prophet (peace be upon him). He apprehended that some lapse on his part might have displeased his Lord and that He may have abandoned him. In this *Sūrah* he is reassured and comforted that Allah is not displeased with him. Rather, the interlude was a natural process, like the night overtaking the day so as to provide rest and tranquillity to man. In this sense, then, given the Prophet (peace be upon him) had been subject to revelation for some time, his nerves could not continue to bear this for much longer. Hence, this break was devised in order to give him some relief. In the early days of receiving revelation such

breaks were more frequent, given the Prophet (peace be upon him) was not accustomed to its effects in that phase. It is explained in the introduction to *Sūrah al-Muddaththir* and in note 5 on *Sūrah al-Muzzammil* that the Prophet (peace be upon him) felt the emotional burden of receiving revelation. With the passage of time, however, he got used to it, and hence there were no further breaks.

Subject Matter and Theme

The objective of this *Sūrah* is to comfort the Prophet (peace be upon him) and relieve him of anxiety; hence the breaks in revelation. While invoking the bright day and tranquil night, he is assured that his Lord has not forsaken him. Nor is He displeased with him. This is followed by the glad tidings that the hardships in the early stage of his mission are a passing phase. What is to come will be better for him. Soon Allah will shower on him His bounties so amply that he will be well-pleased. This is one of the clear predictions of the Qur'ān which came true, though at that time there was no sign of its actualization. For the Prophet (peace be upon him) was then a lone person, pitted against his entire community gripped by *Jāhiliyah*. No one expected that he would achieve such grand success.

In effect, Allah asks what prompted the Prophet (peace be upon him) to think that He had forsaken him or was displeased with him, and especially since He had been kind to him since birth. He had been born an orphan yet Allah had provided for his care and upbringing. He was unaware of the right way and Allah guided him. He was in want and Allah enriched him. All these favours clearly indicate Allah's love and concern for him all along. This brings to mind Verses 37-42 of *Ṭā Hā* in which the Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) is reminded of Allah's special favours to him in order to reinforce him whilst he was on his way to take on the mighty tyrant Pharaoh. It aimed at assuring him that Allah would not forsake him. Rather, He would strengthen him out of His grace.

The Prophet Muḥammad (peace be upon him) is finally instructed on how he should respond to the divine favours bestowed upon him in terms of his treatment of fellow human beings.